

Condemn Arsenal Land Sale

Solons Seek Area For Wildlife Haven

(Picture on Page 2)

By DON CHAMBERLAIN
(Springfield Bureau of the Copley Newspapers)

SPRINGFIELD (Special) — The United States Government has been asked in a joint resolution offered in the House of the Illinois General Assembly to withdraw a 2,325-acre tract known as the Joliet Arsenal property from sale. The resolution declares the tract more valuable to the State of Illinois as a wildlife area than for use as an industrial site.

The resolution was offered in the House this week by Reps. A. B. McConnell (R-Woodstock) and John P. Manning (R-Rochelle.) It was sent to the House Executive Committee by Speaker Paul Powell (D-Vienna) for hearing and study.

The resolution declares "The Federal General Services Administration is threatening to sell for use as industrial sites a 2,325 acre tract, known as the Joliet Arsenal property, owned by the federal government but used under permit by Illinois as a wildlife area for the past 10 years and which the Illinois Department of Conservation wishes to develop as a permanent wildlife refuge . . ."

The resolution goes on to say that the site is far more valuable to the people of Illinois as a recreation and wildlife area than it is as an industrial site for the following reasons:

"It is the only area of suitable size of its kind available in the northern Illinois-Chicago area for use as a wildlife refuge and recreational area, while an adequate number of smaller sites, not suitable to wildlife conservation purpos-



CONTROVERSIAL AREA—Probably the most controversial piece of real estate in the state of Illinois is this wildlife and public shooting area, part of the present Joliet Arsenal property. The view is looking northwest with the Santa Fe railway, U. S. 68 and the Desplaines river all visible. The diagonal road from lower right to upper left is Blodgett road. Sportsmen want area retained as a wildlife refuge. Civic leaders of Joliet want it sold as a site for industry. The General Services administration will take bids on the property Tuesday in Chicago. (Strappazon photo.)

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(Continued from Page One)

es, are available to meet the need for industrial sites in the area.

"The tract already has been improved by the Illinois Conservation Department as an area devoted to the development of upland game and migratory waterfowl as well as a future site of major recreational facilities easily available to the Chicago metropolitan area and is a heavily used public hunting area which to date has been used by over 60,000 persons.

"The Illinois Department of Conservation has been operating the area and making improvements therein on the supposition that the land would eventually be transferred by the Federal Government to the State of Illinois pursuant to an act of Congress which permits the transfer to states without payment if such land is best suited for wildlife conservation uses.

"The U. S. Department of Interior has in fact recommended that the site be transferred to the State of Illinois for use as a wildlife conservation area."

In conclusion the resolution says:

"Resolved by the House and Senate of the General Assembly of the State of Illinois, that the General Services Administration is requested to immediately withdraw from public sale the 2,325-acre tract and instead grant to the Illinois Department of Conservation application that such tract be transferred to Illinois for use as a wildlife conservation area and for recreational purposes."

The resolution asks that a suitable copy be forwarded to Franklin Floete, administrator, General Services Administration, Washington, D.C.

(Continued on Page Two)